

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Reno County Courthouse

and or common Same

2. Location

street & number 206 West 1st _____ not for publication

city, town Hutchinson _____ vicinity of

state Kansas code 20 county Reno code 155

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Board of Reno County Commissioners

street & number 206 West 1st

city, town Hutchinson _____ vicinity of state Kansas 67501

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Registry of Deeds- Reno County Courthouse

street & number 206 West 1st

city, town Hutchinson _____ state Kansas 67501

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Kansas State Historical Society - Hutchinson has this property been determined eligible? _____ yes ☒ no

date 1985 _____ federal _____ state _____ county ☒ local

depository for survey records Kansas State Historical Society, 120 W. 10th

city, town Topeka _____ state Kansas 66612

7. Description

Condition

☒ excellent
☐ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Reno County Courthouse (1929-1930) is located at 206 West First Avenue in Hutchinson, Reno County, Kansas (pop. 40,284). The five-story, buff colored, brick and Carthage and Bedford limestone, Art Deco courthouse stands two blocks west of Hutchinson's central business district on the northwest corner of First Avenue and Adams Street. Its reinforced concrete and hollow clay tile structure stands on a concrete slab foundation. Its main facade is oriented to the south and comprised of three major units. A central angled and metal roofed, two-bay, six-story, stepped limestone tower containing the entrance and the elevator is flanked by two identical, flat roofed, three-bay, five-story stepped limestone and brick units. These units are flanked on either side by a flat roofed, two-bay, one-story limestone projection. The eastern and western elevations employ the same concept, with a flat roofed center, five-bay, five-story, brick and limestone unit flanked by two identical flat roofed, two-bay, five-story, brick and limestone stepped units. A flat roofed, seven-bay, one-story limestone unit projects from the base of the eastern and western elevations. The building's rear is comprised of two, flat roofed, three-bay, five-story units which flank a two-bay, four-story unit covered with a steel lead skylight. A one-story, buff brick and cement addition (1971) housing the Reno County Law Enforcement Center projects from the building's western side. The courthouse measures approximately 152 feet from east to west and 143.5 feet from north to south. The Law Enforcement Center measures approximately 168 feet from east to west and 137 feet from north to south.

The southern elevation of the Reno County Courthouse is comprised of a center, six-story tower flanked by two, five-story symmetrical units. The projecting base sits on a smooth cut, Carthage limestone foundation. Its lower half is comprised of Bedford limestone block with deeply incised joints. Its upper half and the rest of the tower is comprised of tightly laid Bedford limestone blocks. Limestone steps lead to the arched doorway which stands in the tower's projecting base. It is comprised of a recessed, central, bronze, double door flanked by two single, swinging doors. Three-over-three, square transom lights surmount each single door, a 6/6 transom light surmounts the center door. Many of the transom panes are divided in half to form right triangles. A rectangular, embossed, bronze panel surmounts each transom light. A tripartite, half oval transom window surmounts the bronze panels, many of its rectangular panes are divided in half to form right triangles. Ribbed vaulting ornaments the recessed doorway's arch. Limestone abutments flank the doorway, a copper bearing, steel lead light fixture hangs from an ornament on each abutment, below each lights stands a rectangular copper bearing, steel lead grille. The number "19" is carved into the western spandrel of the door arch, the number "30" is carved into the eastern spandrel of the door's arch, denoting the building's construction date. Quarter suns blaze beneath each number. The words "Reno County Courthouse" are carved into the surmounting frieze, denoting the function of the building. Stepped stone cappings with repeating geometric inscriptions flank the frieze. Limestone drip spouts project from the tower's east and west elevations frieze areas.

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The upper four stories of the tower are comprised of two, central fenestration bays flanked by a grille bay on each side. Six-over-six steel casement windows stand in each bay at each level, separated by embossed, copper bearing, steel lead panels. The sixth floor windows are arched. The window bays are recessed with ribbed surrounds. The three copper bearing, steel lead grilles are housed in limestone abutments. A recessed limestone panel surmounts the lower grilles. A flag pole and balcony project from the fifth floor of each grille bay. Stepped and incised limestone entablatures surmount the abutments and the tower's apex.

The three-bay, five-story units which flank the tower stand on a tightly laid, Carthage limestone block base pierced with rectangular windows. Bedford limestone blocks with incised jointing comprise the first story wall which is pierced by three, 1/2 steel casement windows with limestone sills. A smooth, limestone entablature caps the first story. A recessed, two-bay, one-story Bedford limestone unit, built on a Carthage limestone foundation, projects from the east and west sides of the three-bay, five-story units. Two rectangular windows pierce the foundation, surmounted by two, 1/2 steel casement windows. Its smooth limestone entablature capping rises slightly higher than the first story entablature on the main building.

The second and third stories of the building's southern elevation comprise another design unit. The 1/2 steel casement windows stand three bays across, separated vertically by fluted pilaster strips. Embossed copper bearing, steel lead panels surmount the second story windows. An undecorated limestone entablature caps these units. The three-bay, fourth story is composed of three, 1/2 steel casement windows separated by buff brick walls and capped with an incised entablature. Limestone quoins stand in the outer corners. This unit recesses slightly from the one below it. The fifth story is a two-bay unit, stepped considerably back from the fourth story. One-over-two steel casement windows pierce the wall. The corbelled brick entablature affects a repeating pyramidal design.

The east and west elevations are symmetrical but for the first story of the west elevation which is obscured by the abutting Law Enforcement Center. The nine-bay elevation stands on a Carthage limestone foundation, Bedford limestone blocks with deeply incised joints comprise its first story. A projecting, central, one-story, seven-bay unit is flanked by a window bay on either side. These windows are 1/2 steel casement with limestone sills. A bronze, double door with a transom light stands in the center of the projecting units. A limestone surround with a panelled architrave stands around the recessed doorway. Copper bearing, steel lead light fixtures flank the doorway. Limestone steps lead to the door. Limestone drip spouts project from the north and south corners of the projecting unit's entablature.

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The second, third, and fourth stories are comprised of five units: a center, five-bay, three-story brick unit projects slightly, flanked by a two-story, two-bay, limestone unit, surmounted by a one-story, two-bay, brick fourth story unit. One-over-two steel casement windows line the second story of the central component. Recessed brick panels surmount each window. Four-over-four, triple hung steel windows with arched transoms stand above the panels. The five window openings stand in a ribbed recession and mark the two-story courtroom space on the east elevation. Six slight buttresses stand between each window. An incised frieze and an undecorated limestone cornice conclude this unit. The two-story bays are comprised of two, 1/2 steel casement windows on each level, separated by fluted pilaster strips. Copper bearing, steel lead spandrel panels surmount the second story windows. A plain limestone entablature concludes this unit. The fourth story units are comprised of 1/2 steel casement windows with an incised limestone entablature. This unit is stepped back slightly from the third floor unit.

Three units with a center projecting unit comprise the fifth story. It is stepped back slightly from the fourth story. The five-bay, brick center unit is comprised of double steel casement windows surmounted by incised limestone lintels exhibiting a repeating pyramidal design. The entablature is comprised of a triple limestone stepped course. A two-bay unit flanks the center unit on either side. These units are pierced by 1/2 steel casement windows surmounted by a corbelled brick pyramidal designed entablature. Limestone drip spouts project from the north and south corners of the entablature. A fire escape is attached to the northwest side of the western elevation, running from the fifth floor of the courthouse to the roof of the Law Enforcement Center.

The building's northern elevation or rear stands on a Carthage limestone foundation which is masked by an enclosed wooden corridor running the length of the elevation. The eight-bay, first story is comprised of Bedford limestone blocks with deeply incised joints. Eight, 1/2 steel casement windows pierce this level and levels two, three and four; six, 1/2 steel casement windows pierce the fifth story wall. The units are distinguished by projections, the west and east three-bay units project slightly from the outer wall space and the central, two-bay unit. This configuration continues for the next three floors, although the wall space is brick. Recessed brick panels surmount the second steel 1/2 steel casement windows. A limestone beltcourse caps the third story, allowing the fourth story to recess. The fifth story is comprised of the two outer, three-bay brick units; the center bay concludes at the fourth story. The corbelled brick pyramidal entablature of the east and west elevations wraps around the unfenestrated outer wall space of the northern elevation's fifth story. A buff brick chimney rises from the roof of the western corner of the north elevation.

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The six-story courthouse has five full floors, the central tower houses the elevator, the sixth floor tower accommodates the machinations for the lift. When built, the western half of the third floor and the fourth floor were left unfinished, ready to accommodate future uses. The fifth floor served as the Reno County Jail until 1971 when the Law Enforcement was constructed.

The first floor plan is an open, two-story plan with a surrounding second story mezzanine on the south and north walls. The third floor also incorporates the two-story concept, with the eastern courtroom and the courtroom hall being two stories high.

The courthouse's two elevators stand in the eastern wall of the building's vestibule. The northern elevator retains its original bronze doors with allegorical etchings of Industry, Wisdom, Strength, and Justice. It also retains its floor dial, its "Allegheny Metal" or stainless steel interior walls, and its rolling prisoner gate in the rear. The southern elevator was refurbished in the 1960s or 1970s, forfeiting all of its significant detailings. The vestibule retains its marble block veneer wainscoting, the marble surround for the elevator doors, the marble flooring, and the brass plated United States Postal Box on the northern corner of the east wall. The elevator doors on levels two through five are plain but the openings are surrounded with marble architraves.

The upper floors are also accessed by a stairway built into the western wall of the tower. The stairwell's plaster wainscoting is marbled. The stair railing is comprised of cast bronze newel posts, aluminum or "Benedict Nickel" grille work, and wooden railings. The railings have been painted brown. These railings are also employed on the mezzanine level and are also painted brown. The cap, the shaft, and the base of the newel posts exhibit the stepped pyramidal motif employed on the exterior of the building.

The pyramidal motif is pervasive throughout the building's interior, evidenced in the walnut burl panels and capitals which project from the monumental pillars that stand in the open first floor space, in the door surrounds and openings, in the copper bearing, steel lead, milk glass light fixtures, in the metal ventilation grilles, and in other elements such as the Halsy-Taylor water fountain's marble splash board.

Walnut burl with Japanese inlay is used for the major woodwork throughout the building. This is evidenced in the wainscoting on the first and second floors and in the eastern courtroom on the third floor, the panelling on the first floor pillars, the beaming on the second story ceiling, many of the door surrounds, and the built-in furniture, such as the first floor counter and the third floor courtroom bench, bar, desks, and projecting panelling. The courtroom furniture has aluminum insets and the bar gates are "Benedict Nickel". The gates have been painted brown.

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Marble wainscoting is employed on the third floor elevator foyer in rusticated, ashlar form and in the courtroom hall in smooth, matched panels. A rusticated, ashlar marble fireplace stands in the southern wall of the third floor's elevator foyer. Marble architraves surround the courtroom hall doors. The baseboards on the first, second, and third floors are marble. The plaster walls above the wainscoting on the first floor and the north wall of the eastern courtroom were once marblized, they are now painted white and mustard respectively.

The beaming in the courtroom hall and the eastern courtroom appears to be unfinished mahogany. It exhibits elaborately carved floral and vegetal motifs reminiscent of 15th Century Spanish carvings. The courtroom hall beams retain their original, subtly painted colors. The courtroom beams have been painted mustard and gold. The beaming in both rooms conforms to the curved cornice lines. In the courtroom hall, short beams run from east to west, conforming to the wall's curvature. These short beams intersect with the north and south beams which delineate the skylight and the base of the curvature. Two flat beams run from east to west below the two murals on the north and south walls of the courtroom hall. The skylight is flanked by two ceiling beams on either side which run from east to west. The beams in the courtroom curve across the ceiling and conclude in fluted, Ionic pilasters which run to the floor.

Rectangular, canvas-backed murals depicting the settlement of the plains stand in the friezes above the northern and southern courtroom hall doors. The mural on the north wall depicts a meeting between Amercian Indians and white pioneers. The mural on the south wall depicts a wagon train travelling across the Great Plains. A canvas-backed mural conforming to the eastern courtroom's ceiling curvature covers the upper section of the room's northern wall, overlooking the judge's bench. This mural is allegorical, depicting a judgement scene with a sitting female Justice flanked by a female Mercy on the east and a female Execution on the west. A mortal awaiting judgement stands on the outer sides of Mercy and Execution.

The east courtroom maintains much of its architectural integrity but has suffered from water damage. The original curved plaster ceilings have been covered with canvas. The repainting of the beams and columns is probably a result of the water damage. The leaking appears to emanate from the skylight which stands in the ceiling above the courtroom hall, one space directly west of the courtroom. The courtroom maintains its original wall tapestries in the western wall niches, these niches mirror the arched windows in the eastern wall. The windows retain their transom shades but the draperies are non-extant. The arched wall niches have been pierced with small, rectangular heating and air conditioning vents. Two original ventilation grilles, surmounting tapestry panels, stand in the courtroom's southern wall.

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Additional changes made to the interior of the Reno County Courthouse have been few. The building retains most of its original copper bearing, steel lead , milk glass light fixtures, the only significant removal has been the lights which hung from the second floor ceiling. These were replaced with low hanging, florescent lights. The original black and white tile flooring on the first level has been replaced with beige linoleum. The black and white tiles are retained on the ssecond and third floors. The western courtroom on the third floor was redone in the 1960s, the ceiling was lowered and most of the significant details were obscured, however, this was never an elaborate space. Both the fourth and the fifth floors have been altered at various times. The fourth floor was an empty space when the courthouse was buit and the fifth floor served as the county's jail until 1971.

The Reno County Courthouse maintains a very high degree of interior and exterior architectural integrity. Attempts in 1954 to extend the mezzanine floor for a complete second story were blocked. The 1971 addition of the low lying Law Enforcement Center to the building's west side has altered the appearance of the courthouse, however, this addition does not detract significantly enough to affect the streamlined, modernistic design of the Reno County Courthouse.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates	1929-1930	Builder/Architect	William Earl Hulse, Architect Frank Blaser and Vollmer, Contractors
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Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Reno County Courthouse (1929-1930) is being nominated to the National Register under criterion C for its architectural significance. Designed by Hutchinson based architect William E. Hulse, (1882-1943), the stepped, five-story, brick and limestone Reno County Courthouse is a fine and rare Kansas example of the Art Deco style. Most Kansas county courthouses were built between 1880 and 1920 and exemplify either Richardsonian Romanesque or Neo-Classical antecedents. The Art Deco courthouse is Hulse's eighth and last Kansas county courthouse and is his only example in that style. His other courthouses were built during the 1910s and 1920s in the prevailing Neo-Classical styles. The Reno County Courthouse maintains a very high degree of interior and exterior architectural integrity and is a significant example of the Art Deco style as interpreted in a pre-Depression designed public building.

The Reno County Courthouse exhibits a traditional sense of modernism based on streamline decoration. The open first floor plan with its twenty-four foot ceilings and surrounding mezzanine are characteristic of the Art Deco style, in the 1930s the plan was described as "modern banking style." Much of the metal, stone, and plaster fixtures and details used in the interior and exterior of the building are style defining elements which were standard issue from such catalogues as Voigt's and Jacobson's. The built-in first floor counter and the built-in third floor courtroom desks, benches and the bar are also style defining elements and also may have been catalogue issues. New York artist Andrenanti's allegorical courtroom and courtroom hall murals and the allegorical bronze etched elevator doors are very much in keeping with the standard motifs and decorative approaches employed during the Art Deco period. Reinforced concrete, hollow clay tiles, steel window frames and sashes, and steel storage files with steel roller curtains were employed to achieve fireproof construction and records storage facilities in the Reno County Courthouse.

The Reno County Courthouse was constructed by the Wichita firm of Blaser (Frank) and Vollmer, who were responsible for three other Art Deco influenced Kansas county courthouses located in Goodland, Sherman County (1931); Washington, Washington County (1932-1934); and Syracuse, Hamilton County (1937).

The Reno County Commission spent \$386,429.20 for the design and construction of the building and an additional \$126,595.86 for furnishings and other accoutrements. These costs were covered with monies raised in tax levies in 1925 through 1930 and with money from the county's 1931 general fund. The Hulse courthouse replaced an 1882-1883 Second Empire courthouse located several blocks to its east which had been condemned in 1924 and subsequently was torn down.

Hulse specialized in public and commercial buildings, designing many of the Reno County (est. 1872) public schools during his career, which spanned from the 1910s until the late 1930s. Hulse designed seven Kansas county courthouses in addition to the Reno

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County Courthouse. These Neo-Classical structures are located in Greensburg; Kiowa County (1913-1914); Sharon Springs, Wallace County (1914-1915); Leoti, Wichita County (1916-1917); Great Bend, Barton County (1917-1918); Larned, Pawnee County (1918-1919); Lyndon, Osage County (1922-1923); and Hiawatha, Brown County (1925-1926). The blueprints for the Reno County Courthouse (1929-1930), indicate that the building was Hulse's two hundred and sixty-second commission.

Hulse was the President of the W.E. Hulse Co., Architects and the Engineering Investment Company and an officer in the Fifth Avenue Building Corporation and the Stamey Hotel Company, businesses which likely contributed to his successful career as an architect. In addition to his Hutchinson base, Hulse also had architectural offices in Sioux City and Des Moines, Iowa.

In the decade before establishing himself as a private architect, Hulse worked as a civil engineer for the Holly and Swink Railway and the Santa Fe Liberal and Englewood Railway, likely designing many depots and other railroad related structures during his tenure. He studied Civil Engineering at the University of Missouri from 1898 until 1901.

The Reno County Courthouse has served the county for fifty-six years and has maintained its overall architectural integrity. Attempts in 1954 to extend the mezzanine floor for a complete second story were blocked. The 1971 addition of a low lying law enforcement center to the building's west side has altered the appearance of the courthouse but this addition does not detract significantly enough to affect the architectural integrity and significance of this pristine Kansas example of Art Deco, public architecture.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1.13 acres

Quadrangle name Hutchinson

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	4
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5	9	3	4	9	0
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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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Verbal boundary description and justification The nominated property sits on a 1.13 acre rectangular tract comprised of Lots 44-56 and Lots 58 and 60 in Hutchinson, Kansas. It is bounded to the south by West 1st, to the east by Adams, to the north by adjacent property lines, and to the west by Jefferson.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Martha Gray Hagedorn, Architectural Historian

organization Kansas State Historical Society date October 10, 1986

street & number 120 West 10th telephone 913-296-5264

city or town Topeka state Kansas 66612

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

 national x state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Executive Director, Kansas State Historical Society date November 14, 1986

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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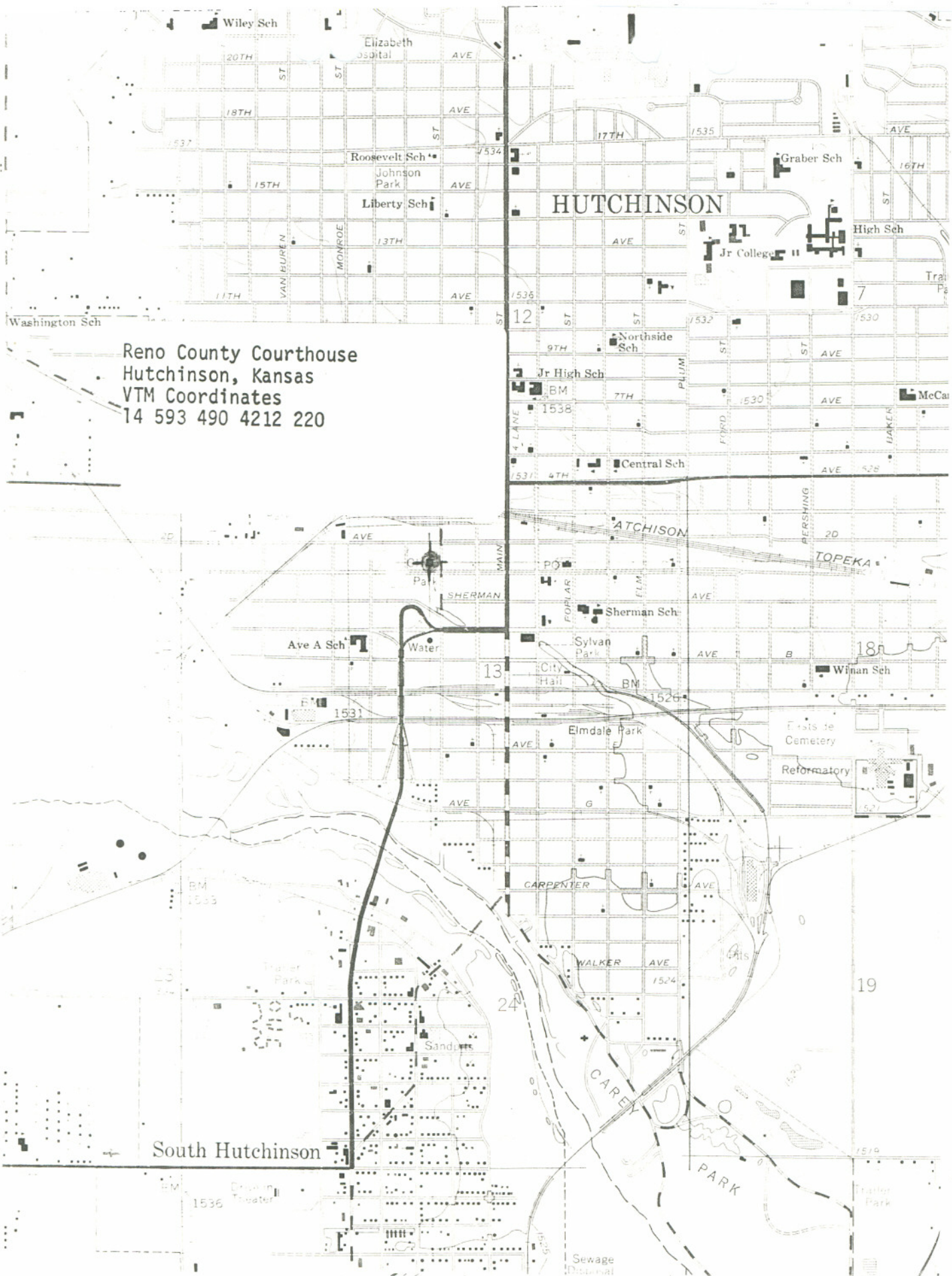
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Hutchinson Record, 9 July 1943.

Lee, Edna. "Reno County Courthouse." (National Register nomination draft, 1986).

Topeka Capital, 27 April 1930.



Reno County Courthouse
Hutchinson, Kansas
VTM Coordinates
14 593 490 4212 220